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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXIX OCTOBER 1974 No. 10

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'Although people stood all round, they appeared unreal like shadows or pictures painted on canvas, and the slightest sense of shame or hesitation did not touch the mind on that account [i.e., his violent agitation from grief at separation from the Divine Mother]. But immediately after I lost consciousness on account of unbearable anguish, I saw that form of the Mother consisting of consciousness with hands that give boons and freedom from fear—the form that smiled, spoke and consoled and taught me in endless ways!'

*

'In those days I felt as if I was struck on the head with a stick when anyone spoke of worldly matters; I would fly to the Panchavati where I would not have to hear the talk on those topics. I would feel frightened and would hide myself when I saw worldly people. Relatives appeared to me to be enemies trying to push me down into deep pits wherefrom, if I fell once, I might not get up again. I would feel suffocated; it seemed I was at the point of death. I could have peace only when I fled from them.'

*

'Formal worship drops away after the vision of God. It was thus that my worship in the temple came to an end. I used to worship the Deity in the Kali temple. It was suddenly revealed to me that everything is Pure Spirit. The utensils of worship, the altar, the door-frame—all Pure Spirit. Men, animals, and other living beings—all Pure Spirit. Then like a madman I began to shower flowers in all directions. Whatever I saw I worshipped.

'One day, while worshipping Siva, I was about to offer a bel-leaf on the head of the image, when it was revealed to me that this Virat, this Universe, itself is Siva. After that my worship of Siva through the image came to an end. Another day I had been plucking flowers, when it was revealed to me that the flowering plants were so many bouquets.'

[Trailokya (Brahmo devotee and musician): 'Ah! How beautiful is God's creation!']

'Oh no, it is not that. It was revealed to me in a flash. I didn't calculate about it. It was shown to me that each plant was a bouquet adorning the Universal Form of God. That was the end of my plucking flowers.'

*

'People of bygone generations had tremendous faith. What faith Haladhari's father had! Once he was on the way to his daughter's house when he noticed some beautiful flowers and bel-leaves. He gathered them for the worship of the Family Deity and walked back five or six miles to his own house.

'Once a theatrical troupe in the village was enacting the life of Rama. When Kaikeyi asked Rama to go into exile in the forest, Haladhari's father, who had been watching the performance, sprang up. He went to the actor who played Kaikeyi, crying out, "You wretch!", and was about to burn the actor's face with a torch. He was a very pious man. After finishing his ablutions he would stand in the water and meditate on the Deity, reciting the invocation: "I meditate on Thee, of red hue and four faces", while tears streamed down his cheeks....

'Very strong was the faith of the people in those days. One hears that God used to dance then, taking the form of Kali, while the devotee clapped his hands keeping time.'

*

'Oh, what moods I passed through! At Kamarpukur I said to Chine Sankhari and the other chums of my boyhood days, "Oh, I fall at your feet and beg of you to utter the name of Hari." I was about to prostrate myself before them all. Thereupon Chine said, "This is the first outburst of your divine love; so you don't see any distinction between one man and another." When the storm breaks and raises the dust, then mango and tamarind trees look the same. One cannot distinguish the one from the other.'

*

'I met Bamandas at the Viswases' house. I said to him, "I have come to see you." As I was leaving the place, I heard him say: "Goodness gracious! The Divine Mother has caught hold of him, like a tiger seizing a man." At that time I was a young man, very stout, and always in ecstasy.'

ONWARD FOR EVER!

We are all atheists, and yet we try to fight the man who admits it. We are all in the dark; religion is to us a mere talk, a mere nothing. We often consider a man religious who can talk well. But this is not religion. 'Wonderful methods of joining words, rhetorical powers, and explaining texts of the books in various ways —these are only for the enjoyment of the learned, and not religion.' Religion comes when that actual realization in our own souls begins. That will be the dawn of religion; and then alone we shall be moral. Now we are not much more moral than the animals. We are only held down by the whips of society. If society said today, 'I will not punish you if you steal', we should just make a rush for each other's property. It is the policeman that makes us moral. It is social opinion that makes us moral, and really we are little better than animals. We understand how much this is so in the secret of our own hearts. So let us not be hypocrites. Let us confess that we are not religious and have no right to look down on others. We are all brothers, and we shall be truly moral when we have realized religion.

Vivekananda

CASTE SYSTEM *VS* CASTEISM —PART II

EDITORIAL

Excepting the fanatically obscurantist almost everyone is convinced that casteism, which is the degraded and decadent form of the original caste system, should be excised and destroyed. If, as we have seen, division and stratification are inevitable in any society, then the caste system—whose foundational principles are utterly unimpeachable and universally beneficial—should be resuscitated. Undoubtedly, caste is a social institution. But the plan of the pristine caste system is based on religion: the evolution of man from lower to higher stages, from the animalic to the divine. The Hindu scriptures state emphatically that in the Satya-yuga (the first epoch, the present age of Kali being the fourth and last) all humans were brāhmaṇas and in the succeeding ages the other castes came into being in descending sequence. The brāhmaṇa, who by his unselfishness, purity, godliness, and universal love stands as the perfected specimen of humanity, is the ideal man of the caste scheme. By this we certainly do not mean the brāhmaṇa caste of the present day, which has become almost entirely hereditary and petrified.

The *Bhagavad-gītā*, which upholds the caste system with its basic principles of *guṇa* and *karma* (quality and duty) is sometimes criticized for aiding 'substantially in stabilizing the hereditary and caste-ridden society of the Hindus'.[1] But a close and impartial study of the *Gītā* will expose the shallowness of such criticisms. Where the *Gītā* describes the various duties of the four castes,[2] surprisingly, the upper two are allotted not external works and duties but

1 Subhayu Dasgupta: *Hindu Ethos and the Challenge of Change* (The Minerva Associates, Calcutta, 1972), p. 82

2 *Bhagavad-gītā*, XVIII. 42-4

internal traits and virtues, which are to be sedulously cultivated. No less an authority than Sri Aurobindo points this out with characteristic insight :

> 'What the Gita is concerned with is not the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence,—if that were all, its principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma would have no permanent truth or value,—but the relation of a man's outward life to his inward being, the evolution of his action from his soul and inner law of nature.
>
> 'And we see in fact that the Gita itself indicates very clearly its intention when it describes the work of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya not in terms of external function, not defined as learning, priest-work or letters, or Government, war and politics, but entirely in terms of internal character. The language reads a little curiously to our ear.'[3]

Furthermore, human nature is governed by the basic qualities of *sattva, rajas*, and *tamas* (tranquillity, activity, and inertia), and as one or other predominates in one's nature, one comes to be classed as brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, or śūdra. It is possible that one can at various times be any or all these, depending on the state of his mind and external behaviour. As Swami Vivekananda once explained to a devotee who was also a boyhood friend of his :

> 'Take a man in his different pursuits for example : when he is engaged in serving another for pay, he is in Shudrahood ; when he is busy in transacting some piece of business for profit, on his own account, he is a Vaishya ; when he fights to right wrongs, then the qualities of a Kshatriya come out in him ; and when he meditates on God, or passes his time in conversation about Him, then he is a Brahmin. Naturally, it is quite possible for one to be changed from one caste into another.'[4]

A little earlier, the same devotee had challenged Swamiji as to his teaching and initiating with mantras his western devotees. This meant that they were entitled to utter the *praṇava* or *omkāra*, the most holy word of the Vedas, which the devotee considered the prerogative of the brāhmaṇas. Swamiji had asserted, 'My disciples are all Brahmins!' And he then went on to explain that the brāhmaṇa caste and the brāhmaṇic qualities are two distinct things. While in India the qualities of being a brāhmaṇa or a kṣatriya were dying out, in the West people had attained to kṣatriyahood from which the next step was brāhmaṇahood. And many indeed, he declared, had already attained that state too.

So, unlike the virulent social reformers who wanted to pull down and destroy everything in Hindu society, Swamiji presented a constructive solution to the tangled caste question. He pointed out that at the farthest end of this human evolutionary chain stands the lowest man, the *caṇḍāla*, the near-brute man. At the other end stands the ethically and spiritually perfected man, the brāhmaṇa, in whom 'worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. Ideal conditions in a society consist in perfect equality among all its members. Not, surely, by pulling down those on higher levels to the lowest, but by steadily elevating those on lower levels till the state of the perfect man is reached. In the words of Swamiji :

> 'Therefore, our solution of the caste question is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is not jumping out of our own limits in order to have more enjoyment, but it comes by every one of us fulfilling the dictates

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[3] Sri Aurobindo: *Essays on the Gita* (Second Series) (Arya Publishing House, College St., Calcutta, 1945), pp. 334-5

[4] *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. V (1959), p, 377

of our Vedantic religion, by our attaining spirituality, and by our becoming the ideal Brahmin. There is a law laid on each one of you in this land by your ancestors, whether you are Aryans, or non-Aryans, Rishis, or Brahmins, or the very lowest outcastes. The command is the same to you all, that you must make progress without stopping, and that, from the highest man to the lowest Pariah, every one in this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin. This Vedantic idea is applicable not only here but over the whole world. Such is our ideal of caste, as meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realization of that great ideal of the spiritual man, who is non-resisting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure and meditative. In that ideal there is God.'[5]

In those of us who are struggling for elevating themselves and in those who have already reached a high state, love and consideration for others are natural developments. They do not seek privileges in reward for the moral heights achieved by them. On the contrary, they tend to deny themselves those which society may graciously confer on them. Their prime concern is to help others to rise higher. Swamiji emphatically called upon the higher castes to plan and work for the elevation of the masses. He urged upon the brāhmaṇas :

'Arise and show your manhood, your Brahminhood, by raising the non-Brahmins around you—not in the spirit of a master—not with the rotten canker of egotism crawling with superstitions and the charlatanry of East and West—but in the spirit of a servant. For verily he who knows how to serve knows how to rule.'[6]

Swamiji had witnessed such an ideal 'reformer' in his own guru, Sri Ramakrishna, whom he declared to be 'my hero'. Sri Ramakrishna, that 'Brahmin of brahmins', as is well known to readers of his biography, day after day swept and cleaned the lavatory of a scavenger, so that humility would become an inalienable part of his character. True spirituality expunges all sense of egotism, hauteur, or outsized self-consciousness, which cause all clashes and conflicts. Humility and godliness, again, are unfailing antidotes for the feeling of jealousy—that hall-mark of the slave—a special stumbling block to national progress and unity. Seeing the same God manifest in all, man transcends jealousy. Of whom can one be jealous when God or one's self is seen in all ?

If the upper castes have a duty to discharge in elevating the millions of brothers and sisters stagnating in the lower social strata, these less fortunate millions have even a more momentous duty to perform. That is, to rouse themselves from age-old inertia, to free themselves from the servile, bickering mentality, and to engender a sense of self-trust and optimism. Those who have studied the hydra-headed nature of casteism are aware that these lower caste masses all suffer from feelings of dominance and/or submission with respect to each other, for there is a well developed caste hierarchy even among them ! First of all they must close their ranks and unite. But this unity must not be for waging war against the higher castes. No useful purpose will be served by such hostility and militancy. That approach is dangerous too—to themselves and to the whole country, as a house divided against itself cannot stand. But a constructive unity will create a sense of self-respect in them and mobilize their hidden psychological resources of courage and optimism.

They must further realize that what creates the gulf between the upper and lower castes is not so much money or circumstances or traditions, but culture, edu-

5 ibid., Vol. III (1960), p. 198 ; also see pp 293-6
6 ibid, Vol. IV (1962), p. 300

cation, and character. Swami Vivekananda gave out one of the most practical hints to the lower castes when he urged them to acquire the culture of the brāhmaṇas :

> 'Instead of wasting your energies in vain discussions and quarrels in the newspapers, instead of fighting and quarrelling in your own homes—which is sinful—use all your energies in acquiring the culture which the Brahmin has, and the thing is done. Why do you not become Sanskrit scholars ? Why do you not spend millions to bring Sanskrit education to all the castes of India ? That is the question. The moment you do these things, you are equal to the Brahmin. That is the secret of power in India.
>
> 'Sanskrit and prestige go together in India.'[7]

In this context we may refer briefly to the great saint and social reformer of Kerala, Sri Narayana Guru (d. 1928), who though born an untouchable, achieved both scholarship and spirituality, and then set in motion a great wave of regeneration among his caste-fellows. He emphasized their acquiring modern education so that they could improve their economic condition. By insisting that they obtain Sanskrit learning, he made them acquire culture. He organized and consecrated temples for his community members, through which they got the necessary religious sustenance. What is most remarkable about his reformatory efforts is that they were absolutely free from hatred or violence against the upper castes. In Narayana Guru the leaders of the underprivileged in the other parts of India will find a glorious modern example worthy of emulation.

A right attitude to caste and its concepts, to the basic cultural unity of the country, and the rich heritage of the race must be inculcated in the young minds through education. It is only then that the country will have an enduring national integration of minds and hearts. But it seems that our education in the home as well as in schools and colleges has largely failed in this regard. What is worse, while the parents seem to have been negligent, the schools and colleges seem to have become actual breeding-grounds for the contagion of casteism. This is mainly due, as noted last month, to a false complacency about having overcome casteism with the winning of political independence. But as recent developments have shown, casteism is a real and resurging danger. Parents and guardians should try to foster a fraternal and friendly feeling in children among themselves and towards all others, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. The war against casteism, let us remember, should be fought firstly in the young minds, and for this every home in the country can become a front. Secondly, through properly designed and written text-books and teachers who are themselves disinfected of casteism, our children and youth should be taught to look to broad humanity beyond narrow walls of social conventions, personal jealousies and pride of birth or caste. Thus inter-personal relationships based on one-people one-country ideas, are to be fostered and promoted. In a brilliant monograph entitled 'Modern India', originally written in Bengali (1899), Swami Vivekananda has these concluding words, the spirit of which must be infused into every young Indian heart. Addressing the whole country, Swamiji says:

> 'O India!...forget not that the God you worship is the great Ascetic of ascetics the all-renouncing Shankara, the Lord of Uma;...forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are your flesh and blood, your brothers. You brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that you are an Indian, and proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother." Say, "The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute

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7 ibid., Vol. III, pp. 298-9

Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother." You, too, clad with but a rag round your loins, proudly proclaim at the top of your voice: "The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God. India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age." Say, brother: "The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good", and repeat and pray day and night, "O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a Man!"'[8]

In keeping with the spiritual traditions of this land, casteism and its baneful influence have been fought, down the centuries, by our saints and sages. Not that they have been completely successful; but of all such fighters we may say with ample justification that these godmen have had the greatest amount of success and the most enduring. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'There is only one way to remove them [caste distinctions] and that is by love of God. Lovers of God have no caste. Through this divine love the untouchable becomes pure, the pariah no longer remains a pariah.'[9] Sri Ramakrishna himself was such a caste-breaker. He cited Caitanya as another eminent example. Students of India's religious history may recall numerous other names, such as Rāmānuja, Madhva, Basava, Rāmānanda, Nānak, Kabīr, Tukārām, Dādu, Ravidās and so forth, down to Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. *Bhakti* or devotion to God, is a most potent caste-breaker, and all those who want to come to grips with casteism may make devotion their ally.

We have more than once spoken of casteism as the hydra. This monster in Greek mythology was said to have been the offspring of Typhon and Echidne. Now Typhon was the biggest and most horrendous demon of which the fertile Greek mind could conceive: one who terrorized all the gods and almost killed their king, Zeus himself. And Echidne his mate, half woman and half serpent, was mother of many other blood-chilling monsters besides Hydra. Reared by Hera, rebellious wife of Zeus, Hydra dwelt at the sevenfold source of the River Amymone and haunted the neighbouring swamp of Lerna. It had a dog-like body and nine snaky heads, one of them immortal. "As soon as Hercules struck off one head with his club, two grew in its place. So Hercules called on Iolaus, his nephew and Charioteer, to burn the eight necks as he crushed them; finally the immortal head was buried. Thus Hercules finally destroyed the hydra.

Casteism which has been again and again attacked and apparently struck down, from the time of the Buddha, has somehow revived and spread its vicious tentacles in the Hindu society. The most determined and recent effort to destroy casteism was made by the national leaders and social reformers of the pre-Independence era. Efforts to finish up the job were added by our Constitution-framers. While everyone thought that the monster was finally destroyed, it has staged a most dramatic and powerful comeback. Is it impossible then to destroy this hydra of casteism? We think it *is* possible, but on one condition. Hercules, the hero in the Greek myth, was helped by Iolaus who cauterized the necks of the hydra. Similarly, we have had Herculeses in our Godmen and sages, leaders and reformers, rulers backed by our Constitution. But where is our Iolaus? It is the people

(*Continued on p.* 372)

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8 ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 479-90

9 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600004, 1947), p. 88

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Sasiniketan
Puri
19.9.17

Dear D——,

. . . I am pleased to read your deliberations. You have wished to know my early history. I don't feel any urge to discuss this topic, nor is it to my liking. But then, one or two points about which you have asked, I am answering briefly.

I first saw Sri Ramakrishna at the house of Sri Dinanath Basu at Baghbazar. It is an old story. At that time Sri Ramakrishna used to remain absorbed in *samādhi* most of the time. He had just then become acquainted with Keshab Babu [Keshabchandra Sen]. Kalinath Basu, a brother of Dinanath Basu, who was a follower of Keshab, had been charmed by meeting Sri Ramakrishna and prevailed upon his elder brother to invite Sri Ramakrishna to their home. Then we were young boys of thirteen or fourteen. When the news that the Paramahamsa was coming spread in our locality, we all gathered there [at the Basu's], desirous of seeing him. I saw that when two persons arrived at the gate in a hired carriage, all turned towards them saying, 'The Paramahamsa has come, the Paramahamsa has come'. First one man got down from the carriage—he had a well-built body, a vermilion mark on his forehead, a golden medallion on his right arm, and impressed one as a man of strength and ability.[1] After alighting he proceeded to help another man to get down; this other appeared very lean. He had a shirt on; his cloth was tied around his waist; he had placed one leg on the footrest of the carriage and the other was still inside. He was utterly unconscious; it appeared as if an excessively drunken man was being brought down from the carriage! When he got down, I saw that an extraordinary radiance was lighting up his face. I wondered whether he was that Śukadeva about whom I had heard from the scriptures! He was finally helped upstairs, and when he had regained a little consciousness, seeing a big picture of Kālī on the wall, he saluted it. Then he sang a charming song, creating a stream of upsurging devotion and harmony in the minds of the assembled people. The song signified the identity of Kālī and Kṛṣṇa:

> 'O Mother, for Yaśodā Thou wouldst dance, when she called
> Thee her precious "Blue Jewel"; [2] . . .
> Where hast Thou hidden that lovely form, O terrible Śyāmā ?'

The unprecedented feeling that arose in the minds of the people through this song is indescribable. Then followed much varied spiritual talk. Once more Sri Ramakrishna visited the house of Dinanath. Later, after the lapse of two or three years, I met him again in his room at Dakshineswar. This much for today. Accept my good wishes, etc.

Ever your well-wisher,
SRI TURIYANANDA

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[1] Hridayram Mukherji, Sri Ramakrishna's nephew.

[2] A pet name of the baby Kṛṣṇa.

ESSAY ON APPLIED RELIGION

ON MAKING SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

NOT BY PRICE BUT BY GRACE

One day a disciple said to the Holy Mother in a mood of great dejection: 'Mother, I have practised so much austerity and *japa* (repetition of God's Name), but I have not achieved anything.' In reply to this, rather curtly the Mother said, 'God is not fish or vegetable that you can buy Him for a price.'[1]

This is very important to remember, that a person who has really spiritually progressed never thinks he has done enough to deserve God's vision.

Another day a disciple said to the Holy Mother with great earnestness, 'Mother, I am coming to you so frequently and I have received your grace. But why have I not achieved anything? I feel that I am as I was before.'

Sweetly replied the Mother:

'My child, suppose you are asleep on a bed, and someone removes you with the bed to another place. In that case will you know, immediately on waking, that you have come to a new place? Not at all. Only after your drowsiness clears away completely, you will know that you have come to a new place.'[2]

At Jayrambati a disciple once asked the Holy Mother, 'Mother, how does one realize God? Worship, *japa*, meditation—do these help one?'

Mother: 'None of these can help.'
Disciple: 'Then how does one get the vision of God?'
Mother: 'It is only through His grace. But one must practise meditation and *japa*. That removes impurities of mind. One must practise spiritual disciplines such as worship and so forth. As one gets the fragrance of a flower by handling it, or as one gets the smell of sandalwood by rubbing it against a stone, in the same way one gets spiritual awakening by constantly thinking of God But you can realize Him right now, if you become desireless.'[3]

Not one in a million of sincere aspirants can become desireless with the snapping of a finger. So the aspirant needs divine grace. 'The greater the perfection to which a soul aspires,' says Brother Lawrence, 'the more dependent it is upon divine grace.'[4] Again, divine grace cannot be had like a thing from the market, for a price.

But the Holy Mother taught certain ways of attracting divine grace, which are within the capacity of any sincere aspirant. She says:

'...God is one's very own. It is the eternal relationship. He is everyone's "own". One realizes Him in proportion to the intensity of one's feeling for Him.'[5]

Again, as she laid the greatest stress on the repetition of the Lord's Name, she emphasized that:

'Repeating the Name of God once, when the mind is controlled, is equivalent to a million repetitions when the mind is away from God....The repetition must

1 *Sri Sarada Devi The Holy Mother* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras—600004, 1949), p. 512.

2 loc. cit.

3 ibid., p. 513.

4 *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Templegate Publishers, Springfield, Illinois, 1953), p. 18.

5 *Sri Sarada Devi*, p. 423.

be accompanied by concentration. Then alone one gets the grace of God.'[6]

The Holy Mother further taught: 'One should pray for the grace of God.'[7]

Further, saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church assure us: '...be humble in everything and you will receive grace.'[8] And in this they have the sure word of their Master: 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'[9]

All Spiritual Progress Must be Through Renunciation

The 'grace' about which we have spoken in the previous section may be interpreted as being the grace either of one's own mind,[10] or of God. In any case, it is all-important for spiritual progress. And there is one sure sign of received grace. It manifests itself in the aspirant's life as the spirit of renunciation.

All progress in spiritual life has to pass through the portal of renunciation. There is no way of by-passing that portal by any kind of trick or gimmick. No sanctimonious sophistry or learned quibbling is of any help in this matter.

'Spiritual leaders' will not be found wanting in any country, who make light of renunciation in the context of spiritual progress. They are very likely to have large followings also for the simple reason that they in effect tell people you can eat your cake and have it too. And their deluded followers think, 'Ah! this is *the* message!'

Well, it is good to remember that God is not mocked.[11] As Swami Vivekananda teaches, a *comfortable* religion cannot take us far into the spiritual life.[12]

We, also, may talk our heads off against renunciation. That will only evince our attachments to the things of the world, love of the very bondages which we profess to be wanting to break, and slavery to the senses in a gross or subtle way.

We have not to renounce anything if we do not want to. We are free to possess and enjoy whatever we can get at or acquire, and take what goes along with that. But whether we like it or not, if we intend to move Godward our progress will have to be through the portals of renunciation.

In all the four yogas taught in Hinduism as paths leading to the attainment of spiritual illumination, renunciation—though taking different forms in each case—is nonetheless the hall-mark of spiritual progress. Swami Vivekananda teaches this in all clarity in his *Bhakti-yoga*. Bearing in mind the supreme importance of this theme, we are quoting his illuminating words *in extenso*:

> 'The greatest purifier among all such things, a purifier without which no one can enter the regions of this higher devotion (Parā-bhakti), is renunciation. This frightens many; yet, without it, there cannot be any spiritual growth. In all our Yogas this renunciation is necessary. This is the stepping-stone and the real centre and the real heart of all spiritual culture—renunciation. This is religion—renunciation.
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> 'When the human soul draws back from

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6 ibid., p. 508.

7 ibid., p. 422.

8 St. Barsanuphius and St. John, in *Writings From the Philokalia on Prayer of The Heart* (Tr. by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer, Pub, by Faber & Faber, Ltd., London, 1962), p. 356.

9 St. Matthew, XVIII. 4.

10 Cf. *Prabuddha Bharata*, November 1973, p. 460.

11 St. Paul: *Epistle to the Galatians*, VI. 7: 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'.

12 Cf. *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. I (1965), pp. 96-7: 'When a man ... asks for a *comfortable* religion, you may know that he has become so degenerate that he cannot think of anything higher than what he is now; he is just his little present surroundings and nothing more....'

the things of the world and tries to go into deeper things; when man, the spirit which has here somehow become concretized and materialized, understands that he is thereby going to be destroyed and to be reduced almost into mere matter, and turns his face away from matter—then begins renunciation, then begins real spiritual growth. The Karma-yogī's renunciation is in the shape of giving up all the fruits of his action; he is not attached to the results of his labour; he does not care for any reward here or hereafter. The Rāja-yogī knows that the whole of nature is intended for the soul to acquire experience, and that the result of all the experience of the soul is for it to become aware of its eternal separateness from nature. The human soul has to understand and realize that it has been spirit, and not matter, through eternity, and that this conjunction of it with matter is and can be only for a time. The Rāja-yogī learns the lesson of renunciation through his own experience of nature. The Jñāna-yogī has the harshest of all renunciations to go through, as he has to realize from the very first that the whole of this solid-looking nature is all an illusion. He has to understand that all that is any kind of manifestation of power in nature belongs to the soul and not to nature. He has to know from the very start that all knowledge and all experience are in the soul and not in nature; so he has at once and by the sheer force of rational conviction to tear himself away from all bondage to nature. He lets nature and all that belongs to her go, he lets them vanish and tries to stand alone!

'Of all renunciations, the most natural, so to say, is that of the Bhakti-yogī. Here there is no violence, nothing to give up, nothing to tear off, as it were, from ourselves, nothing from which we have violently to separate ourselves. The Bhakta's renunciation is easy, smooth flowing, and as natural as the things around us.... When the moon shines brightly, all the stars become dim; and when the sun shines, the moon herself becomes dim. The renunciation necessary for the attainment of Bhakti is not obtained by killing anything, but just comes in as naturally as in the presence of an increasingly stronger light, the less intense ones become dimmer and dimmer until they vanish away completely. So this love of the pleasures of the senses and of the intellect is all made dim and thrown aside and cast into the shade by the love of God Himself.

'That love of God grows and assumes a form which is called Parā-bhakti or supreme devotion. Forms vanish, rituals fly away, books are superseded; images, temples, churches, religions and sects, countries and nationalities—all these little limitations and bondages fall off by their own nature from him who knows this love of God. Nothing remains to bind him or fetter his freedom. A ship, all on a sudden, comes near a magnetic rock, and its iron bolts and bars are all attracted and drawn out, and the planks get loosened and freely float on the water. Divine grace thus loosens the binding bolts and bars of the soul, and it becomes free. So in this renunciation auxiliary to devotion, there is no harshness, no dryness, no struggle, nor repression, nor suppression. The Bhakta has not to suppress any single one of his emotions, he only strives to intensify them and direct them to God.'[13]

Any spiritual progress has to have its psychological roots in actualized renunciation.

In this context, however, the question of the householder's position in the world, his *swadharma vis-á-vis* renunciation, does arise and needs to be clarified. In many passages from *The Gospel,* Sri Ramakrishna has answered this question from a variety of viewpoints. In fine, according to his teaching, the householder's renunciation will be internal, and that of the monk both internal and external. In his own words: 'I ask people [householders] to renounce mentally, I do not ask them to give up the world. If

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[13] ibid., Vol. III (1963), pp. 70-73.

one lives in the world unattached and seeks God with sincerity, then one is able to attain Him.'[14] The point to be understood is that one must carry into practice what Sri Ramakrishna prescribes here: living in the world unattached and seeking God sincerely. The rest then follows.

In this connection it is important to mention that genuine and mature renunciation always flows as a stream of love to fellow-beings, finding expression in acts of truly selfless service on physical, mental or spiritual planes. A person may profess no religion, wear none of its external marks; he may frequent no house of worship, go to no place of pilgrimage, study no scripture—but if he selflessly serves fellow-beings looking on them as his own self living out there in other bodies, he has indeed progressed spiritually. Of this there can be no doubt. Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches in the *Gītā*: 'Him I hold to be the supreme yogī, O Arjuna, who looks on the pleasure and pain of all beings as he looks on them in himself.'[15] Egotistic 'renunciation' which moves in the closed circuit of sanctimonious selfishness, is not renunciation yet—not until it reaches out and touches the Self that pervades the universe and travels beyond it.

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[14] 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600004, 1947), p. 523.

[15] *Gītā*, VI. 32.

(*Continued from p.* 367)

who have to play the role of Iolaus to destroy this hydra of casteism. Unless the people themselves awake and join the fight against this monster with grim determination, no government or leaders or Constitution can conquer casteism.

MIND AND MATTER

DR. SAMPOORAN SINGH

(Continued from the July issue)

Development of Mind

Dr. Harlow Shapley, a leading spirit among those trying to reconcile modern physics with religion and philosophy, says:

> 'If we ignore the rigorous standards of physics for the moment, we can argue that this universe is multi-dimensional—not simply a space-time scheme. A possible dimension that might require additional natural laws is Consciousness; another is Life.'[39]

He again states:

> 'We can consciously speed the development (of our intelligent and somewhat informed mind). It is not growth in size, or strength, or longevity, but growth primarily in the qualities that we associate with mind, a development that includes those fine indefinables—heart and spirit. And therein lies the nucleus of our cosmic ethic.... We have the potentiality not only of conforming to the cosmic theme of Growth, but we can perhaps elaborate or revise some of the natural rules. Indeed, each day can and should compete with all the yesterdays of the species.'[40]

In one of the first scientific symposia on the 'Altered States of Consciousness', a group of brain researchers, chemists, psychopharmacologists, psychologists, and biofeedback and dream researchers recently got together in the U.S.A. The consensus of opinion was to recommend the establishment of 'inner space labs'.[41] Houston said: 'We are, perhaps, on the verge of a golden age of brain and mind research.'[42]

Wolfgang Pauli concluded more than two decades ago that modern science had brought us nearer to a more satisfactory understanding of the relationship between mind and body, between the inward and the outward, than the concepts of psycho-physical parallelism postulated in the last century.[43] It appears that modern science and parapsychology are following convergent lines and will meet in the foreseeable future.

Characteristics of Mind

I think the use of the expressions 'Universal Mind', 'Divine Mind', 'Cosmic Mind' and 'Mind' by many eminent scientists is rather vague; hence an attempt is made here to define these in more precise terms:

Universal Mind (God): The Lord and Creator of its own worlds. It is the sole conscious Being, the Divine in all existence. The Truth-consciousness is everywhere present in the universe as an ordering self-knowledge by which the One manifests the harmonies of its infinite potential multiplicity. The Truth-consciousness is exhibited by the Universal Mind, which is all-pervading, eternal Reality with the attributes of existence, consciousness and bliss. This may be considered analogous to the 'Brahman' of Indian philosophy.

Divine Mind: The real 'I', the core of our being—a spark, an atom of the Universal Mind. This is the same as the Universal Mind with reference to the microcosm. This may be considered analogous to the 'Ātman' of Indian philosophy.

Cosmic Mind: The Divine Mind after

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39 Harlow Shapley: *Of Stars and Men* (Elek Books, London, 1958), p. 120

40 ibid., p. 128

41 Holden, C., in *Science*, 179, No. 4077, p. 982 (9 March, 1973)

42 ibid.

43 W. Pauli and C. J. Jung: *Naturerklarung und Psyche* (Studien aus dem C. G. Jung Institut, Zurich, 1952), IV, p. 164

its false identification with body. This is the individual aspect of cosmic existence, of eternal Being. With its limitations removed, the Cosmic Mind is the Divine Mind. This is analogous to the 'jīva' of Indian philosophy.

Mind: The subtler manifestation of the pure transcendental unmanifested Consciousness. The grosser manifestation of this Consciousness is the body. The mind and body are destructible, while the Cosmic Mind or Divine Mind is eternal. Both mortal mind (together with ego, intellect, and senses) and matter (body) are fleeting manifestations of the Cosmic or Divine Mind. Mind and matter belong to the relative aspect of existence.

The individualized 'mind of man' and 'mind of animal' differ in degree and in destiny. Firstly, man has a highly developed thinking apparatus while animals have a dormant or poorly developed one depending on the species. Secondly, a man is consciously aware that he is alive; he can meditate within himself, 'I know that I am'. There is no evidence that an animal is aware that it is alive, or that it can meditate within itself.

The main characteristics of the cosmic mind are: (*a*) The world existed for many millions of years without any thinking process or obvious manifestation of cosmic mind. Only a small fraction of the species have embarked on 'getting themselves a brain' and the cosmic mind appears as a late intruder on our planet. (*b*) The body derives its energy from food; i.e., the body is maintained by chemical energy. The thinking process can be shown to derive its energy from the Absolute. Therefore the body is destructible. The body takes its birth from a certain combination of atoms and after death reverts to the original state. The cosmic mind is indestructible and eternal. (*c*) The cosmic mind is the artist that has produced the whole—but never really becomes a part and parcel of the accomplished work.[44] (*d*) The physical world picture drawn by the cosmic mind, in Schrodinger's words, 'lacks all the sensual qualities that go to make up the subject of cognizance. The model is colourless and soundless and unpalpable.... The show that is going on obviously acquires a meaning only with regard to the [cosmic] mind that contemplates it.'[45] (*e*) In Schrodinger's words again:

> 'Life is valuable in itself. Nature has no reverence towards life. Nature treats life as though it were the most valueless thing in the world. Produced million-fold it is for the greatest part rapidly annihilated or cast as prey before other life to feed it. This precisely is the master-method of producing ever-new forms of lime.... "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so!" No natural happening is in itself either good or bad, nor is it in itself either beautiful or ugly. The values are missing, and quite particularly meaning and end are missing.'[46]

As we concluded in the previous instalment, man has throughout the ages sought to improve the quality of his life. Explicitly and implicitly his central goal has been to attain happiness through a deeper sense of self-fulfilment. His struggles to achieve fulfilment have become increasingly complex, but not necessarily more effective The recent advances in science have not added to man's happiness. Therefore we now

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44 Compare Schrodinger (*Mind and Matter,* Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 64): 'On the one hand it [the conscious mind] is the stage, and the only stage on which this whole world-process takes place, or the vessel or container that contains it all and outside which there is nothing. On the other hand we gather the impression, maybe the deceptive impression, that within this world-bustle the concious mind is tied up with certain very particular organs (brains).'

45 ibid., p. 66

46 ibid., p. 67

turn to the insights of Indian sages into the nature of Reality and the way through It to permanent happiness.

Ancient Indian Philosophy of Mind and Matter

According to teachers of Indian philosophy, mind is the inner aspect of our personality and the body is the outer, just as in the case of a tree the root is the inner and the visible tree the outer aspect. It is always the condition of the roots that controls the tree. This is how the mind controls the whole body and there is a very close coordination between the mind and the body. Mind has four facets or attributes: *manas, buddhi, citta,* and *ahaṅkāra. Manas* comprises the early stages of the thinking process, *buddhi* or intellect is the faculty of reason and decision, *citta* is the storehouse of countless impressions and desires, and *ahaṅkāra* or ego is the self-assertive faculty of mind. The human body is like a chariot wherein the Self is the master, the intellect the driver, the mind (*manas*) the reins, and the senses the powerful steeds drawing the chariot through the ways of the objects. It is said that unless the mind is controlled, senses are disciplined, and intellect is stilled, we cannot have the experience of Self-realization.

The seers say that matter is materialized mind-stuff. Matter is dependent on mind for its existence. Matter is born from the Divine Mind and is perceptible to mortal mind; 'in itself and of itself' matter has no reality, no intrinsic existence. Both moral mind and matter are fleeting manifestations of Divine Consciousness, and possess merely relative existence; in reality only Consciousness exists. The self-realized persons know that matter *per se* does not exist because they see that beneath the slight rippling waves of creation is the changeless Ocean of Spirit and Consciousness. These concepts can be intellectually understood but cannot be realized until one has learned the method of converting matter into life force, and life force into Divine Consciousness. The life force or life energy in Sanskrit is called *prāṇa.*

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

> 'An eternal portion of Myself, having become a living soul (Ātman) in a world of living beings, draws to itself the five senses, with the mind for the sixth, which abide in *prakṛti.*
> When the Lord acquires a body, and when he leaves it, he takes these with him and goes on his way, as the wind carries away the scents from their places....
> The light that is in the sun and illumines the whole universe, the light that is in the moon and is likewise in fire—know that light to be Mine.
> Entering the earth, I sustain all beings by My energy, and becoming the sapid moon, I nourish all herbs.
> As the fire *Vaiśvānara* I enter into the bodies of all living creatures, and mingling with the upward and downward breaths, I digest the four kinds of food.
> And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory and knowledge, and their loss as well. It is I alone who am to be known through all the Vedas....
> There are two beings in the world: the Perishable and the Imperishable. The Perishable comprises all creatures, and the Imperishable is said to be the Unchanging.
> But there is another Being, the Highest, called the Supreme Self, who, as the Immutable, pervades and sustains the three worlds.
> As I surpass the Perishable, and as I am higher even than the Imperishable, I am extolled in the world and in the Vedas as the Supreme Self.'[47]

Brahman [the Supreme Self] and Ātman are the substrata of all changes in space and time, though themselves remaining changeless and one integral whole.

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[47] *Bhagavad-gītā,* XV. 7, 8, 12-18

The organs of action and perception are in the external body, the gross body of man. The external body perishes in a few years; any simple cause may disturb or destroy it. According to Indian philosophers, the mind (including intellect and memory) is the finer body; according to Christian theology it is called the spiritual body of man. The finer body in Hinduism is believed not to be so easily perishable; yet it sometimes degenerates and at other times becomes strong. Generally, the mind grows and intellect develops with age up to a certain period; with old age the mind, intellect, and memory also decline. Just as the body has its progress and decadence, so also have the mind, intellect, and memory. Various medicines and drugs also affect these three; everything external may act on them and they also can react to most components of the external world. The memory has two aspects—'short-term', and 'long-term'. The mind, intellect, and memory—except some essence of 'long-term' memory—belong to matter. This body is not self-luminous or self-conscious: if it were, it would be so in a dead man also. Neither can the mind or the spiritual body be self-conscious, as all consciousness is of the nature of the Ātman. Decadence is possible only of that light which is borrowed and is not of its own essence.

In the manifested or the relative state, the mind acts in the field of sensory experiences. The desires of the senses can never be satisfied; they involve a man more and more and thus keep him in bondage. There being no chance of lasting contentment, the cycle of birth and death has to continue. Momentary joys, together with a sense of progress through action and effort, keep the mind engaged in outside activities. Such activities bind the mind to diversity and are clearly opposed to the process of converg-ence, which leads to the absolute state. We are cut off from the sheet anchor and are afloat rudderless on the sea of life. Each of us tries to catch at a straw to save himself. The natural result is that after a brief lifetime of struggle with chance winds and waters, we sink into the great oblivion, without having solved the riddle of life—whence we come and where we are bound—the why and wherefore of human life.

Matter, we find, is but a projecting screen for the spirit—the all-pervading spirit that attracts matter in varying degrees of densities and vibrations—to manifest itself in various patterns of forms and colours, at different levels of existence. A 'contact' of soul with matter is the source of creation and brings into being the many forms, patterns, and designs through the inscrutable power known as māyā. This māyā is defined as the eternal principle of transformation of the nameless, formless and actionless Primordial Entity into various names, forms and actions. It is on that account the source of illusion about the Reality to the ignorant mind, for no fault of its own.

The self-existent, infinite consciousness plays the role of an infinite number of subjects through its false identification with the mind and body, which are also the creations of māyā. Māyā is the queen of the phenomenal world—the principle of unreason, the fountain-head of irrationality, the enchantress, of infinite resources. There is no escape from her hypnotic influence save through knowledge. A redeeming characteristic of māyā is that she is vulnerable to reason and discrimination, and thus carries in her own self the secret of her own death. This truth has been graphically described by Vyāsa in his commentary on the *Yoga-sūtras*:

> 'The mind is like a river with two opposite courses—one moving towards good and the other towards evil. The good one moves in the channel of discrimination and leads to liberation. The evil one moves in the channel of non-discrimination and leads to bondage. By dis-

passion the evil course is arrested, and the practice of discrimination sets free the good course.'[48]

The Upaniṣads can be said to have discarded the world of senses and intellect, and all that revolves around the conception of dualism, as an illusion for which there is no logical or ontological justification. The failure of logic is not due to the limitations of human intellect, but to an intrinsic defect in sense-perception itself, which vitiates the very nature of objective knowledge. The philosophers of the West have entirely relied upon reason as their only dependable instrument, so they have not been successful in their positive findings. The eastern philosophers transcended reason with the help of a cosmic state of consciousness, which directly intuits the truth. The superiority of Vedānta lies in the fact that while it fully utilizes the resources of reason, it at the same time corrects and supplements the results obtained thereby, with its super-intellectual means. And these never contradict the findings of reason. The tremendous hold of Vedānta upon the intellectuals of India is due to this secret of the reconciliation of reason with supra-rational intuition.

The human body is the best environment for the search for God. In fact, the very macrocosm is in the microcosm of the body. To realize Him, one has to enter into this laboratory of the human body. Our consciousness, our breathing, all our movements, and our feelings are all part of the cosmic process just as much as the blowing wind, the growing trees or the insects buzzing. Understanding this, one has to break through this surface crust of consciousness and to turn the attention inwards toward the subtler level of thought until the mind transcends it and comes in contact with the source of all intelligence. In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna in effect:

> 'Open your awareness to the absolute field of life and, established in that awareness, perform action.' 'In this, no effort is lost and no obstacles exist.'[49]

The aim of human life is to discover the Divine and to manifest it. It is conscious union with the Divine.[50]

To the blessed person who has attained this level of consciousness, the world of plurality and the gradations of values have lost all their pretensions. The phenomenal world stands exposed, and māyā is conquered.

Yes, the sages affirm the root of misery is duality. There is no other remedy for it except the knowledge that God alone is real and that all objects of experience are unreal, or the realization that I am the Pure One, Consciousness, and Bliss.

48 Vyāsa's commentary on the *Yoga-sūtras*, I. 12

49 *cf. Gītā*, II. 48 and 40

50 Sri Aurobindo Circle, Twenty-Sixth Number (Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry), Message by the Mother on March 28, 1970; Twenty-eighth Number, March 28, 1971

Synthesis of Ancient Indian Philosophy and Modern Scientific Thought

A comparison between Indian philosophy and modern scientific thought on mind and matter may be outlined as follows:

Indian Philosophy	*Modern Scientific Thought*
1. The eastern approach to knowledge is based on the non-varia-	The western scientific approach to knowledge is based on the non-

bility of the subjective means of observation, provided that the subject is purified and perfected. There is a level of consciousness called Divine consciousness or God-consciousness, which is non-variable in its nature; and, therefore, on that level the knowledge of an object never changes, remains authentic and 'scientific' for all times. This knowledge is more than 5,000 years old.

2. Matter is a derivative of Mind. The individualized mind, ego, and senses constitute the instruments of the doer and the experiencer, namely, the *jīva*, the 'dweller in the body'. The *jīva* is the individual aspect of cosmic existence. The *jīva* draws its energy from the Absolute. With the limitations removed, the *jīva* is Ātman. The Ātman is eternal, imperishable, infinite.

3. This philosophy deals with the true values of the science of life and art of living. Direct contact with the transcendental Being alone can give fullness to every aspect of life. The absolute Being is the basic reality of life, the foundation of all thinking, which in turn is the basis of all doing. This philosophy of being, thinking, and doing is the true philosophy of the integrated life.

4. The aim of human life and the methodology of achieving this end was clearly enunciated about 5,000 years ago. The aim of

variability of the objective means of observation. The knowledge gained at each specific level of existence is different; hence that knowledge will not be complete and fulfilling. Scientific truths are always open to correction and continued perfection, as human intellect has also its own limitations. Science may be therefore, defined as a never-ending search after an ever-receding goal. This knowledge is 300 to 400 years old.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the idea of a mechanistic universe and the doctrine of materialism was accepted by most scientists. During the past eighty or more years, the stream of knowledge has been heading towards a non-mechanical reality. The thought that the material universe is derivative from consciousness is gaining ground. There is clear evidence that the physicist's viewpoint may well bridge the gap between science and ancient Indian philosophy.

Physical science does not touch the subject of living but tries to penetrate deep objectively to understand the mechanism of life and the universe. It is so relentlessly objective that it gives rise to the concept that everything which life can offer is present on the obvious levels of existence, and that it is useless to aspire to anything deeper than external appearances. It advocates the concept of materialism.

Science and technology have placed new machines, new gadgets at our disposal, but this has not added at all to the sum total of our

(*Continued on p.* 385)

PROFILES IN GREATNESS

REFLECTIONS ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN—II

THE FIRST INAUGURAL

Lincoln arrived in Washington on 23 February 1861, to find the city in a turmoil. There was a feeling of 'the awful imminence of war'; jealousies were developing among some who would soon make up his Cabinet; and waiting to pounce on the President-elect was an army of office-sekers.

Delegates from twenty-one states who still hoped for a peaceful solution of the slavery issue—each on his own terms—were waiting to consult with Mr. Lincoln. They found him friendly but firm. Some who had expected to find this 'phenomenon from the prairies' an ignorant countryman quickly discovered their mistake. He proved to be more than a match for any of them.

One Southern delegate tried to twist a Lincoln remark to suggest that the President-elect would be willing to yield to the South, would not go to war on account of slavery. At this misconstruction Mr. Lincoln's expression became sad and stern.

If he became President, he replied, he would take an oath that he would to the best of his ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. He said he regarded this as a great and solemn duty which with the support of the people and the assistance of the Almighty he would undertake to perform. The Constitution, he said, could not be preserved and defended until it was enforced and obeyed in every part of every one of the United States. He made it plain that he intended to see that it was.[1]

The inaugural address on 4 March was conciliatory but resolute. To a nation still not at war, the President set forth plainly and dispassionately the controversy over slavery, disavowed any intention of interfering with slavery in the states where it already existed, and argued temperately against secession as a right. At the same time he warned that the government would 'hold, occupy and possess its forts and property'.

The President urged his fellow countrymen to think calmly and well upon the whole subject, arguing that nothing valuable could be lost by taking time, and that there was no single good reason for precipitate action.

'Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and

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1 *The Lincoln Reader* (Ed. by Paul M. Angle, Pub. by Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J., 1947), p. 325 (Report by L. E. Chittenden).

a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favoured land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty,' he said.

To the many Southerners and Southern sympathizers who were present at the ceremonies the President addressed his next remarks:

> 'In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors.... We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies.... The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of Union when touched again, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.' [2]

The War Begins

But by now it was too late for a bloodless settlement. The olive branch so eloquently tendered was rejected. The war began officially six weeks later when Confederate batteries fired upon Fort Sumter, a fortified island in the harbour at Charleston, S.C. The President, trying to avert an act of hostile surprise, had notified the Governor of South Carolina of the government's intention to resupply the garrison with food. This was intepreted by Confederate authorities as a provocative act.

In the years that followed, especially in the early years of the war when the Union's fortunes were at their lowest and most desperate level, Lincoln's self-mastery almost passed belief. The self-reliance, the independence of judgment, the fortitude under attack that had characterized his life so far now served him and the country well. He revealed inner resources of strength that seemed to have prepared him for any evil that might come.

After the first battle of Bull Run, when the Union's routed and demoralized army straggled back into Washington, the President remained outwardly calm. The Union thereafter suffered a succession of military disasters. The commanding general, George B. McClellan, whose troops outnumbered the enemy, was never satisfied that he had enough. The North was hungry for action, but there were exasperating delays. Lincoln, though often in distress and sometimes in despair, revealed a patience that was legendary. He submitted to delays by McClellan not from weakness or irresolution, but because at the time the alternatives would have been worse.

McClellan was always difficult and at times he was impossible to deal with. In the fall of 1861 the President and his Secretary of State, Mr. Seward, called at the general's house, but were told that he was attending a wedding. A servant said he would return in an hour. When McClellan returned and was told that the President was waiting, he ignored the information and went upstairs, passing the room in which Lincoln was sitting. When the President asked the servant to notify McClellan of his presence, he was informed that the General had gone to bed.

Afterwards Lincoln made light of the snub, merely remarking that it was better at such a time not to be making a point of etiquette and personal dignity.[3]

Often the President thus exemplified Kipling's famous lines:

> 'If you can keep your head when all about you
> Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;

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[2] *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Ed. by Roy P. Basler, Pub by Rutgers University Press, 1953), Vol. IV, p. 271.

[3] *Lincoln Reader*, p. 378 (quoted from John Hay's diary).

If you can trust yourself when all men
doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by
waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good nor talk
too wise....'

Lincoln and his Cabinet

Nowhere was Lincoln's capacity for leadership more apparent than in his dealings with members of his Cabinet. In this group were men like Seward who had been Governor of New York, and Chase who had been Governor of Ohio. Both were accustomed to the administration of public affairs. Yet Lincoln, without such experience, proved himself the superior of both. Lord Charnwood said that he 'ruled with undisputed authority, talked with them collectively on the easiest terms, spoke to them as a headmaster to his school when they caballed against one another, and kept them in some sort of unison in a manner which astonished all who knew them'. No other chief, he said, could have induced them to serve so long in concord.[4]

Unknown to many, there was another extraordinary facet in this complex and sometimes contradictory man. In him modesty and power were opposite sides of the same coin. Lincoln's secretary and biographer, John Hay, did not regard him as modest. 'No great man', he said, 'is ever modest. It was his (Lincoln's) intellectual arrogance and unconscious assumption of superiority that men like Chase and Sumner could never forgive.'[5]

[4] Lord Charnwood: *Abraham Lincoln* (Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1916), p. 405.

[5] William H. Herndon & J. W. Weik: *Life of Lincoln* (World Publishing Co., 2231 West 110th St., Cleveland, 1949), pp. 416-7.

Dr. William E. Barton tends to agree with this assessment. He wrote:

'When Lincoln worked to advantage, it was always in a position in which he could be the leader. He was never so constituted as to follow other men's lead. Writers who know only the imaginary Lincoln tell us much of his modesty; he was modest, in a sense. But all men who knew Lincoln did not think of him as modest. They thought of him as a man of towering ambition and inordinate self-assertion. It was this quality in Lincoln, a quality still for the most part unrecognized and habitually denied, that combined with his modesty to make him capable of leadership.'[6]

Emancipation Proclamation

In his inaugural address Lincoln had said that he had no intention, directly or indirectly, to interfere with slavery in the states where it then existed. But by June of the following year things were going so badly for the North that he decided he must change tactics or lose the war. Without consulting the Cabinet and without their knowledge, he prepared the original draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, a manifesto which has been called 'one of the most beneficent military decrees in history'.

There were practical as well as humanitarian reasons for this. Slaves were not fighting for the South, but thousands of them were perforce helping the Southern war effort as field labourers and producers; and other thousands were aiding Confederate armies in the field as waiters and teamsters, as well as in building fortifications and entrenchments. It was Lincoln's design to tap this source of manpower for the North.

There were diplomatic as well as military advantages in freeing the slaves. While

[6] William E. Barton: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Bobbs Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1925), Vol. II, p. 446.

Northern armies were meeting serious reverses in the field, there was always the danger that England and France might extend diplomatic recognition to the Confederacy. But if the North put an end to slavery as a concomitant to victory, neither nation would dare to recognize the South.

Lincoln did not ask the Cabinet for approval of his decision to free the slaves, for he had already made up his mind. In his great perplexity he had gone on his knees in prayer, before the battle of Antietam, and had promised that if a victory was given which drove the enemy out of Maryland he would consider it an indication that it was his duty to move forward. 'It might be thought strange', he said, 'that he had in this way submitted the disposal of matters when the way was not clear to his mind what he should do. God had decided this question in favour of the slaves.'[7]

A preliminary proclamation was issued on 22 September. In it the states in rebellion were warned that if they did not return to their allegiance by 1 January 1863, a second proclamation would be issued declaring the slaves 'forever free'. There were some 3,000,000 slaves in the United States at the time. By the war's end many former slaves were fighting on the Union side or assisting the Union cause as civilians.

Lincoln was, as we have seen, a man of immense privacy. That he was also a man of profound faith is revealed in this sad, reverent, though inconclusive fragment of meditation written in that same September of 1862, but put aside and not found until after his death:

> 'The will of God prevails. In the great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party, and yet human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true, that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere great power on the minds of the contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began, and having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.'[8]

This fragment suggests the loss to history in that Lincoln kept no diary.

LINCOLN AND GENERAL GRANT

For more than two years the Union armies suffered reverse after reverse. They were outgeneralled, outwitted, outfought, often by inferior numbers. Until the emergence of Grant the Union seemed unable to produce a commander who could successfully oppose the genius of the Confederate General, Robert E. Lee. And the true value even of Grant was slow to receive recognition. At the battle of Shiloh, Union losses were so heavy that his dismissal was demanded by the press, in Congress, and even by the public. Lincoln alone stood by him. He must have recalled the inaction, the timidity and the vacillation of a succession of military commanders when he defended Grant, saying only, 'I can't spare this man; he fights.'[9]

The election of 1864 came at a time when Northern unity was shaky in spite of significant victories and unmistakable signs that the South was weakening. The people were weary of war and sentiment for peace was strong, even if it meant concluding the struggle on terms that would have given the South the chance to secede again. As long as Lincoln was President he would not

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[7] Charnwood: op. cit., p. 325.

[8] ibid., pp. 323-4.

[9] A. K. McClure, quoted in *Lincoln Reader*.

weaken in his demand for unconditional surrender of the Southern armies—yet on the most humanitarian terms. But Lincoln's first term was nearly over, and there was opposition within his own party to his renomination. His Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, was intriguing against him and for his own nomination. In the end, however, the wisdom of the people proved superior to the expediency of the politicians, and the President's renomination in Baltimore was immediate and almost unanimous.

Lincoln's Democratic opponent was now General McClellan, the man he had had to dismiss from command of the armies two years before because of his many failures to fight. Uncertain of re-election, Lincoln exerted pressure on his commanders to finish the war before election day. He wanted not only to put an end to slavery, but to do all that was possible to re-unite the country. But despite his fears, again the inspired common sense of the people prevailed, and Lincoln was triumphantly re-elected.

Lincoln had refused to accept appeasement as the price of unity. Because he believed the preservation of the Union was a greater cause than freeing the slaves, he had been able to free them. And in spite of his uncompromising opposition to slavery his heart was entirely free from hatred or even anger towards his fellow-countrymen of the South.

Lincoln and Reconstruction

Tragically, it was not given Lincoln to play a prominent part in the reconstruction of the South, though he did live to see the victorious end of the war. Reconstruction was to be reserved for crude and inept hands. But it was constantly on his mind. He wanted freedom for the Negroes and provision for their education at public expense. But he wanted much more, including the enfranchisement of educated Negroes and Negro soldiers. He had even proposed the indemnification of former slave-holders for their losses; but in this he found no support even in the Cabinet.

It was Lincoln's main desire to have the work of reconstruction proceed as rapidly and with as little controversy as possible. By 1864 several Confederate states had come under Union control, posing difficult problems of governing them. Military governors were appointed, and Lincoln urged them in all possible ways to give the people a chance to express their wishes at elections, to get the expression of the largest numbers of people possible.

Lincoln was apprehensive that in Southern elections, the very thing would happen that after his death did happen. He warned, 'To send a parcel of Northern men here as representatives, elected, as would be understood—and perhaps really so—at the point of the bayonet, would be disgraceful and outrageous.' [10]

Sharp disagreement arose in 1864 when a bill was carried in Congress which specified that a state could be reconstructed only according to a plan which Lincoln felt would be dangerous. He refused to sign it into law and promptly found himself on a collision course with the bill's influential sponsors, two men who did all in their power to prevent his re-election that fall. But he willingly risked this danger for the sake of the principle.

On the morning of the day he was shot, in what turned out to be his last meeting with the Cabinet, Lincoln pointed to what he regarded as the main obstacle to reconstruction. 'We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union,' he said. 'There is too much desire on the part of some of our good friends to be masters, to interfere with, to dictate to those states, to treat the people not as fellow citizens;

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[10] *Charnwood*: op. cit., p. 401.

there is too little respect for their rights. I do not sympathize with those feelings.' [11]

LINCOLN'S COMPASSION

Biographers have not exaggerated the enormous burdens of the Presidency which Lincoln bore without complaint. Secretaries estimated that he spent three-quarters of his time in meeting people, despite all efforts to shield him from annoyance. Much of the time taken from his busy days was spent in just being kind to people. He wrote letters to the bereaved. He acted as peace-maker. He countermanded death sentences.

The American soldier did not take kindly to discipline. The punishment for desertion, sleeping or negligence on sentry duty was severe, frequently death before a firing squad. Lincoln was constantly under pressure by the parents or friends of men condemned to death, and his response was compassionate. 'You do not know', he told a visitor, 'how hard it is to let a human being die when you feel that a stroke of the pen will save him.' Inevitably this brought protests from the military. One general complained that Lincoln was destroying the discipline of the army. Still he did not spare himself in his efforts to inquire and intervene whenever he could justify his longing for mercy.[12]

Mrs. Lincoln said that with the death of their son, Willie, in the White House, a change had occurred in her husband's religious outlook. That grief was followed by four years of unsurpassed trial in which Lincoln had stood alone in crisis after crisis. He had grown in moral and spiritual stature; in humility, patience and compassion. He had proved himself an exception to Lord Acton's conviction about the inevitableness of corruption by power. For although the Presidency in war-time gave him extraordinary powers, he used them with humility and compassion.

If anyone ever understood the weaknesses of democracy, it must have been Lincoln; yet he was not disillusioned by them. He believed that government 'of the people, by the people, for the people', could be made to work. And his philosophy of democracy at the war's end had not changed from that which he summed up in a letter written a year or so before his election as President:

> 'As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.' [13]

The expression 'credibility gap' had not been coined when Lincoln was in the White House, but his integrity and his sense of responsibility were well known. To a caller at the White House he said:

> 'If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time.' [14]

There are many reasons why Lincoln is respected, admired and beloved more than any other American. Biographers have tried to sum them up. Perhaps Lord Charnwood has expressed them as briefly and accurately as any:

> 'He was misunderstood and underrated in his lifetime, and even yet has hardly come into his own. For his place is among the great men of the earth. To them he belongs by right of his immense power of hard work, his unfaltering

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11 ibid., p. 450.

12 ibid., p. 421.

13 Carl Sandburg: *Abraham Lincoln—The Prairie Years* (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1925-26), Vol. II, p. 310.

14 A. K. McClure, in *Bartlett's Quotations* (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1949), p. 457.

pursuit of what seemed to him right, and above all the childlike directness and simplicity which none but the greatest carry beyond their earliest years.'[15]

THE SECOND INAUGURAL

Lincoln's second inaugural address, delivered less than six weeks before his death, was the work of a man long accustomed to soul-searching inquiry. 'Probably no other speech of a modern statesman uses so unreservedly the language of intense religious feeling,' Lord Charnwood wrote, calling the address a profession of faith as well as a great state paper.[16]

The address was short in comparison with the first inaugural address. The war was not yet over, but the end was in sight. The President noted that the war's progress was well known. Neither party had expected it to last so long, and neither had expected the cause of the conflict to cease with, or even before, the conflict itself. He said:

'Each looked for an easier triumph and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invoked His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any man should dare to ask God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—and that of neither has been answered fully.'[17]

The President continued:

'The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."[18] If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences, which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He now gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still must it be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."'[19]

The Conclusion of the address was the summation of all that he hoped would be accomplished when the war was ended:

'With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.'

—C. H. MACLACHLAN

15 Charnwood: op. cit., Editor's Preface.
16 ibid., p. 439.
17 *The Collected Works,* Vol. VIII, pp. 332-3.
18 *St. Matthew,* XVIII. 7.
19 *Psalms,* XIX, 9.

(*Continued from p.* 378)

human life is to discover the Divine and to manifest it. happiness. We scientists have forgotten the ends in our absorption with the means. We have not yet clearly defined the aim of research and purpose of life.

(*Concluded*)



ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

THE GREATEST DEVOTEE OF THE LORD

King Bharata[1] had many younger brothers. Some of them became rulers of different parts of his vast kingdom and others excelled in learning. Nine of them, being seekers after the highest values, became sages, adepts in spiritual science. They were Kavi, Hari, Antarikṣa, Prabuddha, Pippalāyana, Āvirhotra, Drumila, Camasa and Karabhājana. To these men of Knowledge the whole universe, gross and subtle, was filled with the Lord. They wandered on this earth seeing the same Ātman in all beings. Their path was unobstructed. They could go wherever they liked—the regions of gods and demigods, and other spheres.

Once of their own accord they visited the place where King Nimi[2] was performing a sacrifice. The king and the Brāhmaṇas arose in their honour and received them. Seeing them to be great devotees of the Lord, the king, well pleased, seated them with the honours befitting such guests. Then he very humbly said:

I know you are constantly in communion with the Lord. Devotees of the Lord like you, wander about to purify all the worlds. Though short-lived, rare indeed is the human body, an instrument for attaining the highest values for embodied beings. But still more rarely seen are the devotees of the Lord. Therefore, O sinless ones, we shall ask you about the ultimate good. In this world even a moment's association with the holy is a treasure for human beings. If you think us competent to hear them, pray tell us the disciplines by following which the Lord is pleased and gives even Himself to those who have surrendered themselves at His feet.

Kavi: In this world the body and senses are non-eternal. Those who identify themselves with these are always disturbed. In such a condition, constant remembrance of the Lord is the only way to the attainment of fearlessness. He has also spoken of the means for attaining Him. To reach Him these means are the easiest disciplines for most people. By following these disciplines a man neither errs nor is enticed. Even if he follows them in a desultory way or ignorantly, he will not stumble or take a false step. In brief, whatever you do with your body, speech, mind, senses, intellect, or impelled by your inborn nature—offer everything to the Supreme Lord. When one turns away from the Lord and forgets Him through His Māyā by identifying oneself with body and sense-enjoyments, then he is

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1 The renowned ruler of ancient times, after whom the name of India as 'Bhārata' was taken. One of the remote ancestors of the Pāṇḍavas, the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*.

2 A descendant of Ikṣvāku, and ancestor of the line of kings of Mithilā.

beset with fear. Therefore a discriminating soul should worship Him with single-minded devotion, looking upon the preceptor as the Deity and as his own Self.

Though the sense of duality has no absolute existence, to the mind of one who meditates on it, it appears like a dream or mental desire. So a wise man should control that mind which weighs the pros and cons of actions; after that there is fearlessness. Listening to the auspicious stories of the birth and deeds of the Lord in this world, and singing about Him and His Names without any fear of ridicule, one should wander about with a mind free from desire.

Thus chanting His glories, one's love of Him increases and one's heart melts away in love. He, like a madman, overstepping conventions, sometimes laughs aloud, weeps, cries, sings, or dances. With undivided devotion to the Lord, he then bows to the sky, air, fire, water, earth, the heavenly bodies, living beings, the cardinal points, trees and the like, rivers and seas, and all created things, considering them as the body of the Lord. As one who eats food gets satisfaction, nourishment and relief from hunger with every morsel, so he who has resigned himself to the Lord acquires at once devotion, direct knowledge of Him, and dispassion for worldly things. O King, those who serve the Lord in this way attain these three, and after that supreme peace.

Nimi: Now kindly describe to us the characteristics of the Lord's devotee among men: how does he move and talk; and what are the distinctive traits by which he becomes the favourite unto Him?

Hari: He who sees the glory of the Ātman in all beings and all beings in the Ātman, the Lord, is the foremost of His devotees. He who cherishes love for the Lord, friendship with His devotees, compassion for the ignorant and indifference to his enemies, is a mediocre devotee. He who, with faith, worships the Lord in the image only, and neither in the devotees nor in other beings, is an ordinary devotee. He is a devotee of the highest order who, seeing the universe as the Power of the Lord and contacting the objects in that light, is not affected by pleasure or pain. One who, on account of recollection of the Lord, is not moved by mundane phenomena such as birth and death, hunger and thirst, fatigue and fear—which really belong to the body, senses, mind and intellect [and never to the Self]—is the foremost of devotees. He whose mind is free from the chain of desire and action and whose only refuge is the Lord, is undoubtedly the foremost devotee. He is indeed beloved of the Lord, who never identifies himself with this body by virtue of his birth and pursuits, caste, colour, or stage of life. He is the best among the devotees, who makes no distinction between his own and that belonging to others, in the matter of his body and possessions. He looks upon all created beings with an equal eye and is always calm. He is the foremost of the votaries of the Lord, who even for the sovereignty of the whole universe does not deviate for a trice from the lotus feet of the Lord which are difficult even for gods to attain. Just as with the rising of the moon, the oppressive heat of the day disappears, so the fever in the devotee's heart is banished by the cool lustre of the Lord's feet; and that fever can never appear again. He is the chief of the devotees, in whose heart resides the Lord, who is bound by the cord of love, and whose Name—repeated even unconsciously—destroys multitudinous sins.

Nimi: The Māyā of the Lord bewilders even those who are adepts in māyā (conjuring tricks). I wish to know, revered sirs, something about that Māyā. We are still not satisfied, after drinking your ambrosial words about the Lord which are the antidote for all suffering caused by worldly afflictions.

Antarikṣa: O King, Māyā is that energy

by which the primal Puruṣa, as the Source of the entire creation—with the help of the gross elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether), manifested all forms of life, great and small, for the enjoyment and emancipation of embodied souls. For this purpose, having entered into all beings as their inner Controller, He divides Himself thus: one as (identified with) the *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ); and ten, in the form of the ten organs, thus enjoying all objects of the senses. In this manner enjoying, by means of the senses illuminated by the inner Controller, the embodied soul identifies itself with the created body and again and again becomes attached to it. For the fulfilment of desires all beings perform actions and wander in this world experiencing the agreeable and disagreeable fruits thereof. Having been caught in the unending chain of action, the source of all evils, all beings repeatedly and helplessly go through the cycle of birth and death till the final dissolution of creation. When the destruction of the elements is imminent, all-powerful Time draws the gross and subtle back to their unmanifested cause. Forsaking His universal Form, the Puruṣa, like fire without fuel, enters into subtle causes. All the elements go back to their causes and together with the senses, mind, intellect, etc., finally merge in Prakṛti. This is the Māyā of the Lord with its three aspects—creation, preservation, and destruction—which I have described to you. What else do you want to hear?

Nimi: O eminent sages, this Māyā of the Lord is difficult to cross. Please tell us how even dull-headed people, who have no control over their minds, can easily cross it.

Prabuddha: One must observe how humans, living in pairs as husband and wife, striving to gain happiness and to remove misery, obtain only contrary results. What happiness can be derived from wealth, which is so difficult to get, which can only be earned by constant painful effort, and which leads to one's death? Or, what joy can one get from the possession of home, children, friends, relatives, and animals—transient as they are—and the fruit of one's actions? Similarly one should realize that the heavenly regions are also transient, their attainment being the fruit of one's actions. There too, as in this world, there is rivalry with those who are superior, mutual bickering among equals, hatred towards those who are inferior, and fear of a fall—as there is here among chieftains. One desiring to know the highest good should take refuge under a teacher who knows the essence of the scriptures and is himself an illumined soul. Considering him to be one's favourite deity, one should serve him sincerely and learn from him about the *bhāgavata-dharma* (religion taught by the Lord) by which the Lord is pleased—the Lord who is the Self of the universe and who gives Himself to His devotees. One should cultivate self-control, purity, humility, forgiveness and other virtues, and associate with the holy. One should also sing the name and glories of the Lord and practise austerity, equanimity, scriptural study, charity, truthfulness, and meditation. .... He should make friends with the devotees of the Lord and adore them. Having his mind consigned to the Lord he will sometimes weep, laugh, dance, or sing. Sometimes he will be silent; again he will talk to others about the Lord. .... In this way being initiated into the *bhāgavata-dharma* and being attached to the Lord through intense love, the devotee will become free from the insurmountable Māyā.

THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

Swami Yogeshananda

Strictly speaking, to discuss this subject properly one ought oneself to be a mother. However, we shall take refuge in the dictum of Swami Vivekananda: 'By Mother-worship is not meant difference between father and mother. The first idea connoted by it is that of energy—I am the power that is in all beings.'[1]

As one looks over the many lectures and articles on this topic in years gone by, and studies the problem of presenting the idea of Mother-worship to an audience not familiar with it, one comes to feel that finally it does not have very much to do with whether we are in the Orient or in the West; whether God is masculine, feminine or both; whether the society that spawned us was matriarchal or patriarchal; whether the female is active and the male passive or vice versa; or what kind of primitive images there are in our racial subconscious. It is much more the problem of having a mature and adequate idea of God.

About these matters I have a few things to say. The first is to point to the obvious: that the modern tendency is to minimize the difference between the sexes. Especially in the West nowadays we see attempts on the part of social forces, from art and drama down to advertising and the manufacture of clothing, to play up 'the woman' in man and 'the man' in woman. One of the prime causes for this is the easier life afforded to woman now by the rapid development of technology, which has lightened her burden and endowed her with leisure in which to acquire education and sophistication. We used to take it for granted that the female was the 'weaker' sex—a language used of course by men! Yet Swami Vivekananda among others often pointed to woman's superior capacity to suffer and endure. A man rarely has the opportunity to know the flexibility and creativity of response demanded of a mother—any mother. Most cultures acknowledge the superiority in many respects of the woman; in many little social observances and taboos it is implicit. This is not to say there are not large cultural differences in attitude and behaviour. One need only compare, for example, the tradition in Indian families, which consider it auspicious if the son resembles the mother, or forms a strong attachment to her and remains heavily under her influence, with the Freudian outlook to which this is anathema and held responsible for numerous psychological ills and the unfortunate development of a 'momma's boy'. Or we may compare the behaviour expected of the delivered mother in India, with that in China. The Indian mother, freed from her household duties, makes a veritable business of the care of the infant: fondling, feeding, laughing, playing; relaxed, she deliberately fosters a very specific sort of atmosphere in the home and around the child. For many weeks her functions, and her whole mind, are tuned differently from those of the rest of the family. In China the mother has generally been expected to stay in the field until labour pains began; to retire long enough for a safe delivery; and to report back to her post within a day, or even hours.

These considerations are raised only by way of helping some of us more easily detach ourselves from an exaggerated dependence on the 'maleness' of God (our Judaic inheritance), and receive hospitably an approach to Deity as the Divine Mother.

[1] *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh) Vol. VI (1963), p. 147.

Much more helpful should be the basic question we wish now to ask and try to answer: What are the characteristics of God which make people associate with Him or Her the idea of motherhood?

1. *The Source.* She is the womb, the origin of all beings. As the Upaniṣad[2] tells us: *yato vā imāni bhutāni jāyante....tad brahmeti*—'that from which all creatures are born....that is Brahman.' Sri Ramakrishna while engaged in *sādhanā* in the Dakshineswar temple garden, had the direct vision of this *brahmayoni*, the womb of Brahman, which he saw as a large shining triangle of living light, giving birth to innumerable worlds at every moment.[3] On another occasion when he prayed to the Mother, 'Please reveal to me the nature of Your *māyā*', what he saw was a female figure of great beauty majestically arising from the Gaṅgā and approaching the Panchavati. Soon she gave birth to a child and began to fondle it.[4] We shall not attempt here to make a case for the validity of the Master's visions, but will only remind the reader that many instances are recorded of their objective verification; and that when in agonized doubt he wept in the temple of Kālī, 'Then am I deceived?', the Mother appeared to him and replied, 'If your words are untrue, how is it then that they tally with the facts?'[5]

One further vision of his may be mentioned: he used to see a long white thread proceeding out of his own body, at the end of which would appear a mass of light. This mass would open, revealing within, a goddess playing on the *vīṇā*. As she played, he would see the music turn itself into birds and animals and worlds and arrange themselves throughout the universe. They would all disappear when she stopped playing; the light would diminish and the thread shorten till again the whole was absorbed in him.[6] No wonder he could sing the song, 'Is Mother merely a simple woman, born as others are born? ....She it is who creates the worlds...'[7] All of this goes to show that if we want really to be convinced of the Motherhood of God, the best way is to have it revealed to us, as Ramakrishna did. But until that day, by what further inferences can we reinforce that conviction?

(2) *Her closeness.* There are manifold ways in which it is brought home to us how close is the relationship of the child to its mother. The physical aspect is obvious: the organic dependence for long months in the mother's womb and the symbiotic psychological exchange which goes on in the weeks after birth, with the mother needing the child's demand almost as much as the child needs her supply—for nourishment, protection, comfort, stimulation—or mere presence and physical contact. This organic unity is what we find embodied (quite apart from any theological niceties) in the Madonna of Christian graphic arts. It is spiritually helpful to us, of course, to dwell upon the intimacy of this kind of relationship of the soul with God. When we recognize how we are organically one with Her and She one with us, we can more easily become aware of God's immanence, Her indwelling presence in our heart. Then all the separation which fear and the sense of majesty and power engender can be gradually banished. 'There

[2] *Taittirīya-upaniṣad*, III. 1.

[3] *vide* Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1952), p. 204.

[4] loc. cit.

[5] *vide* 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, 17 E. 94 St., N.Y., 10028, 1942), p. 772.

[6] *vide Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 1964), p. 286.

[7] *Gospel*, p. 473.

should be no awe in love [for God],' [8] says Swami Vivekananda. And here, it is important to notice, there is intimacy without degradation. When we ourselves become as little children, approaching God as our very own Mother, we prepare the ground for the purest sort of relationship we can know, and purify our relations with other human beings as well.

This too is illustrated in one of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences. One day when he was a full grown man, the Divine Mother appeared to him in the form of a Muslim girl, six or seven years old, quite naked, and walked alone with him guilelessly frisking and joking like a child. [9] On other occasions we hear him chiding the Mother: 'How You are showing off in Your Banaras *sari*! Don't bother me now, please. Sit down and be quiet.' [10] One day he was heard in a barely audible confession of the oneness of the Mother and himself: 'Thou art I and I am Thou—Thou eatest—Thou—I eat!... What is this confusion Thou hast created ?' [11] But the Mother, we must remember, does not come and play like this in intimacy except with those who make themselves one hundred per cent Her children.

The Master celebrates this love-play of the Mother and Her devotee when he sings, 'Cherish my precious Mother Syama tenderly within, O mind ; may you and I alone behold Her, letting no one else intrude.' [12]

3. *All-encompassing love.* In God's love there is no trace of partiality. 'How can that be love ?' we ask ; 'That His rain falls upon the just and the unjust alike is proof rather of His indifference than His love.' It depends on how we look at it. Mother Durgā loved equally Her two sons, Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa. Had Kārtikeya had the wisdom to circumambulate Her instead of Her universe, the necklace would have gone to him. It went to Gaṇeśa because he had the intuition to make right choices, not because She loved him more. He loved Her more, perhaps, and it is this which opened his inner eye to the universal omnipresence of his Mother, until he saw Her even in a common cat. Her love is so encompassing that if we can but catch a glimpse of it, we find around us Her all-encilrcling arms. 'Turn but a stone, and start a wing!' The utterances of the Christian saints are full of expressions like this, urging upon us the suspicion that the Lord is more like a mother than like any other entity we know. Their theology denies it ; their expressions confess it. Says one of them, 'God is a yearning love that never refuses us.' And of whom but a mother can that be said ? The Holy Mother, as is well known, addressed even once as *Mā* (Mother!), could never refuse the petitioner's plea ; thus did she manifest her own divinity. This all-embracing love of the Deity has been most wonderfully expressed by Sri Ramakrishna in his climbing to the roof of a building in the Dakshineswar temple garden and crying out to the city of Calcutta: 'Where are you, my children ? O, come to me!' When we make answer to a cry like this, is it any wonder that we find ourselves—if only now and then—caught up into the very lap of the Mother Herself ?

Will you allow me again to use evidence which comes from a higher plane ? In the life of the Holy Mother, when, on her way to Dakshineswar for the first time, she lay acutely ill with fever, God came to her as a beautiful young woman who soothed and consoled her and declared Herself her sister. [13] A simple

8 *The Complete Works*, Vol. III (1955), p. 95.
9 *vide Gospel*, p. 175.
10 ibid., p. 319.
11 ibid., p. 207.
12 ibid., p. 315.

13 *vide* Swami Gambhirananda : *The Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1955), p. 42.

wish-fulfilling dream, psychologists would say; little Sarada had always wanted a sister.... Possibly so: *but* it is recorded that she awoke strikingly improved, and she was soon able to resume the journey. It is Mother who fulfils all of even our wishes; but here She did it in person; and that makes a world of difference.

In the ageless myth from which our Durgā-pūjā springs, how touching is the emotion of Pārvatī's own mother, when for this joyous occasion she has brought her daughter from her husband's (Śiva's) house, and is deploring the life of poverty and austerity with him: 'How can I bear it, being your mother? This time, when he returns to claim you, I shall say to him, "My daughter Umā is not at home."' Thus would God's love protect us from every danger and hardship.

This is how the Master used to sing about it:

> 'O Mother, Thou my Inner Guide, ever awake within my heart!
> Day and night Thou holdest me in Thy lap.
> Why dost Thou show such tenderness to this unworthy child of Thine?....
> Unceasing is Thy love for me a love that cannot see my faults....'[14]

4. *Forbearance.* What can compare with a mother's forbearance? We have already mentioned Vivekananda's citing her capacity to suffer, as the superior strength of woman. It is not only the burden of carrying and pangs of bearing the baby; it is the long-drawn story of the months of infinite patience; the refusal to be rebuffed or hurt; the watchfulness in the night's illness; the determination to be unprovokably cheerful; it is the sheer necessity of being sheet-anchor through the family storms, the anvil on which all blows ultimately fall. What a trial the mother endures, just to weather with serenity the endless tempests her tots go on kicking up! Here is an austerity 'honoured' more often by sullen silence than by praise or tributes.

God must be something like that. Anthropomorphic, you say? We who dare profess that man was made in the image of God, mouthing big words of protest like 'anthropomorphism'! If God has anything at all of a relative nature, if He can be recognized or understood in any way by the human mind, it must surely be in some such terms of motherly forbearance as those above.

Nowhere do we find it more beautifully or poignantly embodied than in the life of Sri Sarada Devi. If one speaks of a crucifixion, it should not be difficult to understand what kind of a living crucifixion was enacted by Holy Mother as she suffered the slings and arrows of her outrageous family. There in her, no selfishness was seen at all. In habitually satisfying everyone else's need before her own, she gave living validity to the possibility of indefinite postponement of the claims of body, life and ego.

How did the Divine Mother teach the quality of forbearance to Sri Ramakrishna himself? In many ways; but to mention only two: 'It will be like this in the Kali-yoga', said She when he complained about the type of aspirants coming to him. And when he asked, at the request of devotees, for respite from the pain of his throat-cancer, She had to remind him, 'But you are eating through all these mouths!'

5. *Forgiveness.* It is one thing to forbear and endure a host of torments; quite another to forgive and forget. A true mother always does both. She can put up with anything from her children; she also puts it all out of her mind and bears no grudge. But suppose someone has been a model 'child' in his behaviour toward God, a veritable embodiment of *dharma*? What then has Mother to forgive him? The

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[14] *Gospel*, p. 590.

answer is: forgetfulness. For never was there a saint who did not have to be forgiven for forgetfulness of God. To remember Him or Her constantly is the lifelong struggle of one and all. 'Though I keep on forgetting You', sings a musician-devotee of Bengal, 'I find, Mother, that You never forget me even once.'

'Mother, this is the grief that sorely grieves my heart,
That even with Thee for Mother, and though I am wide awake,
There should be robbery in my house.
Many and many a time I vow to call on Thee,
Yet when the time for prayer comes round, I have forgotten....'[15]

In the well-known story of the Prodigal Son, the wayward boy returns and is received by an affectionate forgiving father. Would you not like to know how it was with his mother? Alas, the story does not tell us that. How *she* had felt all those years of his absence, how *she* wept as she recognized the world-worn face, how she cooked and served the meal which celebrated this family's reunion—all that should make interesting reading indeed. Someone said of the Holy Mother, 'Whoever you were, however long your absence, she made you feel, when you came to her, that she had been eagerly waiting for you.' Others described her thus: 'She is a heart in which we are always safe; a presence from which we cannot grow away. Yet with all her availability, just see with what dignity she bore herself!' Sri Ramakrishna told his nephew, 'You may speak slightingly to the one who dwells here (in his body) and get away with it, but if the one that is in her raises its hood, even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva will not be able to save you.'[16] That is to say, it is the Mahādevī, the Supreme Goddess, origin of the gods themselves, who will have to forgive you then. If you get forgiveness there, it will truly be divine—a forgiveness, we may add, seen and felt by us most patently in motherhood.

6. *Auspiciousness.* *Sarva-mangala-māngalye*: 'Thou art the auspiciousness in all auspicious things.' This is a thought the Hindu cherishes constantly. Now how are we to understand it? Well, who is it unties our knotted laces, covers our abrasions with healing ointment, kisses and rubs the spot to make it well? That is our earthly mother Who watches over the runnings to and fro of our little aberrant lives and weaves them all back together into a protecting destiny? It is the Divine Mother. She is the granter of success; it is She who causes things to turn out right. This is Her auspiciousness. She is the benediction that forever abides with us, healing, lifting, solving, dissolving, resolving.

This quality of the Mother can best be brought home to us, as devotees, if we think within ourselves every day about the dangers to which we are exposed What are the dangers in *our* lives? So many come to mind: there is the busy traffic through which we have to make our way, with its threat to life and limb; the jostling of the crowds, with their irreducible percentage of madmen and pickpockets; the obscenities and contaminations to which we, despite best efforts, prove so vulnerable; right in our home there are the slippery bath and the faulty electric wiring. There is the faithlessness of 'friends', the waywardness of offspring. What we have to do is to offer in our hearts all these things to Her, who is the guiding, forewarning, protective Presence brooding over all

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we notice that even he had to ward off dangers and get problems solved. Thrown into doubt and confusion by the mischievous remarks of Haladhari and others, straight to the Mother he would go for solace. Invariably

15 ibid., p. 137.
16 *vide The Holy Mother*, p. 66.

She would reassure him, as for instance: 'Remain in *bhāva-mukha*'—that is: 'Dwell here, on the threshold of relative consciousness; play your game, be merry with the devotees and the forms of God; I am behind you, I will protect you always.'[17] That is why he could sing:

'O Mother, what a machine is this that
Thou hast made!
What pranks Thou playest with this toy
Three and a half cubits high!
Hiding Thyself within, Thou holdest the
guiding string;
But the machine, not knowing it,
Still believes it moves by itself.'[18]

7. *Playfulness* Western people, whose ideas of religion are usually shrouded in seriousness and solemnity, quite naturally take time to get accustomed to the thought of God as a Mother, playing with Her children in sport. Yet this is exactly how the Hindu views and integrates into his religious patterns the terrible forms of the Deity. Mother is wearing masks. She is fooling us with all Her varied costumes and Her capers. She is playing hide-and-seek, sometimes concealing, sometimes revealing. Is the baby really fooled? Not for long. So we too, if we are proper children, intimate and well-familiar with our Divine Mother expressing Herself as Nature, will quickly see through any frightful mask She wears, and, laughing, run to seek Her arms. Swami Vivekananda, whose poems are replete with expressions of this conception, says in one:

'You sent me out in the dark to play
and wore a frightful mask;
Then hope departed, terror came, and
play became a task.'

But then:

'Let never more delusive dreams veil off
Thy face from me.
My play is done, O Mother, break my
chains and set me free.'[19]

No doubt Mother can play very roughly at times. But believe it or not, we actually enjoy this game of life and death! If not, would we return to it so often? In *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* there is a remarkable conversation in which the Master answers a question as to why there is suffering in the world, with a description of the *līlā*, or sport, of the Divine Mother

'But this play is our death!' says the questioner.

'Please tell me who *you* are', is Ramakrishna's reply.[20] This is the crux of the whole thing. If we can discover—can *realize*—who God is and who we are, and the relation between us, our play too will be done. Are we ready for that?

Sri Ramakrishna kept on the walls of his room paintings of Tārā, Bhadrakālī, and other representations of Kālī the Mother, which combine both Her terrific and benign aspects It was not because he was a demon worshipper. Each one of these was to him just another form of the Mother of unfathomed sweetness whom he knew so well. Just see what fun She made with him. For instance when, at Hriday's importunate request, he asked Her about some occult powers, She made him see a horrible vision which plainly portrayed their worthlessness![21]

It was a good joke She had, putting in his lap a child and telling him it was his son. In the days of their first acquaintance, she was preoccupied with hide-and-seek: appearing here with just a head, there with an ankle; peeping out from behind a jar; showing up in a cat or a dog. With Rāmprasād Sri Ramakrishna used to sing:

'My Mother's play, declares Prasad,
shatters all rules and laws:

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17 *vide Gospel*, p. 17.
18 ibid., p. 193.
19 *The Complete Works*, VI (1963), p. 177.
20 *vide Gospel* p. 436.
21 *vide Gospel*, p. 745.

Strive hard for purity, O mind,
And understand my Mother's ways.'[22]

And again:

'If Thou dost oppose me, Thou wilt learn what sort of mother's son I am.
This bitterly contested suit between the Mother and Her son—
What sport it is! says Ramprasad. I shall not cease tormenting Thee
Till Thou Thyself shall yield the fight and take me in Thine arms at last.'[23]

Thus Sri Ramakrishna, people came to understand, was nothing less than a full embodiment of the Divine Mother.[24] So overflowing was the maternal feeling in him that his young disciples regarded him more as their own mother than as Master or guru. Even Sarada Devi felt him to be her mother.

Throughout the world this motherliness shows itself in one degree or another. Not only women, but some of the greatest men have been remarkable for it. People felt it remarkably in the person of that staunch jñānī, Sri Ramana Maharshi. A large-hearted motherly affection and concern for the devotees became fully evident in him.

That the Cosmic Being, *which ordinarily we think of as absolute and transcendent, without qualities, attributes, forms or parts, somehow* takes on a Personality, with all the accessibility and readiness of response which this implies, and that this Personality is supremely rich in the qualities and reactions we associate with motherhood—this is a fact, understand it however we may. Swami Vivekananda, whose life was in a sense one long struggle first to accept and then to fully realize this very Mother, said, 'I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine....'[25] Swamiji proved his devotion to the Mother by testing his strength against Her, by challenging, defying, and surrendering at last. This is how he commends it to all of us:

'Last of all will come self-surrender. Then we shall be able to give ourselves up to the Mother. If misery comes, welcome, if happiness comes, welcome. Then, when we come up to this love, all crooked things shall be straight There will be the same sight for the Brahmin, the Pariah and the dog. Until we love the universe with same-sightedness, with impartial, undying love, we are missing again and again. But then all will have vanished, and we shall see in all the same infinite eternal Mother.'[26]

22 ibid., p. 474.

23 ibid., p. 264

24 Cf. Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. VIII (1959), p. 264): 'The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahamsa an Incarnation of Kali? Yes, I think there's no doubt that She worked up the body of Ramakrishna for Her own ends.'

25 ibid., p. 264.

26 ibid, Vol. VI (1963), p. 150.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Reminiscences are taken from: Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600004, 1956—References: No. 1, p. 141; No. 2, p. 366—; and 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Madras, 1947—References: No. 3, p. 345; No. 4, p. 358; No. 5, p. 511; No. 6, p. 559.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from *The Complete Works*, Volume II (1963), p. 164.

David Holden, a veteran British foreign correspondent, wrote a few years back that 'There are times, in any appraisal of modern India, when despair seems almost the only appropriate reaction.' Regarding the problem of casteism too there are many in India who would like to share the 'appropriate reaction' of 'despair'. No doubt many problems in this vast behemoth of a country assume menacingly large proportions. But despair is not the appropriate reaction. An enlightened and determined approach to the problems by the people and their leaders is bound to yield positive results. An overall consensus among leaders and concerted action by the people are the prime need. Casteism is a problem created and perpetuated by man because of his weaknesses. The same man has the strength and resources to fight and extirpate it.

While our September essay analysed the problem, the Editorial this month offers a constructive approach to its solution in the light of Swami Vivekananda's teachings.

Śaṅkara says in the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* that *vairāgya* and *bodha* (renunciation and knowledge) are like the two wings of a bird, for the struggling aspirant to reach the top of the mansion of *vimukti* or liberation. He might in other contexts have said renunciation and divine grace. Because a large proportion of aspirants desperately feel the need of divine grace to sustain and strengthen their self-effort in the form of renunciation. In this month's 'Essay on Applied Religion' Swami Budhananda deals with these two important factors of spiritual life, which when they happily combine yield the invaluable fruit of *vimukti*.

'Mind and Matter', by Dr. Sampooran Singh, M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc., Director of Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur, is the second and concluding part of his article, the first part of which appeared in our July issue. While the first part dealt with the physicist's concepts of mind and matter, the second part presents the viewpoints of the philosopher, mainly ancient Indian, and attempts a synthesis of both thought-streams. The key to unravelling the mysteries of both mind and matter lies in knowing that ultimate principle which, as it were, puts on the garb of duality to enact the cosmic drama of endless phenomena.

This is the second and final part of 'Reflections on the Spiritual Life of Abraham Lincoln', dealing with Lincoln's Presidentship, the years of the civil war, and his re-election. Then as readers of his biography will know, soon after the inauguration, he was shot by a fanatical southern sympathizer one evening in a theatre and died the next morning. He thus became a martyr for the cause of democracy and humanity. Bhavabhūti, the great Sanskrit poet of the seventh century A.D., described in memorable words the nature of truly heroic minds: 'Harder than adamant and softer than

flowers'. And Abraham Lincoln was such a hero. Without a supreme leader of his sterling qualities, the American nation—rent in twain by a war between its own North and South—might have disintegrated. It was Lincoln's compassionate heart, sagacious statesmanship, and deep and abiding faith in God that ensured the liberation of the slaves while yet reuniting the war-scarred nation. Mr. C. H. MacLachlan, the author, who was formerly the Editor of *The Long Islander,* is a long-standing member of the Vedanta Society of New York.

The eleventh book of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is well known for the 'Uddhava-gītā' which forms its major portion. Before the 'Last Message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa' (instructions to Uddhava), come five chapters, of which four form the dialogue between King Nimi and the nine sibling sages, Kavi and others. As these sages belonged to the highest class of illumined souls, and were intoxicated with the love of God, their teachings contain profound utterances on the nature of *bhakti* (devotion to God), the means of attaining it, and the characteristics of the supreme devotee. The 'Dialogue' offered to our readers in this issue, covers most of two, out of those four chapters.

That God is as much our Mother as our Father is a conviction that a Hindu child sucks in with his mother's milk. But it is not so with a westerner who is strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian heritage of the Fatherhood of God. However, in recent decades, with the spread of Hindu influence in the West—especially among the students of Vedānta—the Motherhood of God is being appreciated more and more. Then when a westerner himself appreciates and accepts this attitude towards God and expounds it, that exposition assumes considerable importance for other westerners especially. Swami Yogeshananda, an American-born monk of the Ramakrishna Order, presents an approach to this concept in 'The Motherhood of God'. The article is an edited version of a talk given by the Swami in October 1972 at the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, London, where he is the assistant Minister.

CORRIGENDA

PRABUDDHA BHARATA, August 1974

p. 300	footnote	No. 1,	line 2,	*for*	भक्त्यथ	*read*	भक्त्यर्थं
p. 305	„	No. 19,	„ 1,	*for*	...वैभवश्च	*read*	...वैभवाश्च
p. 305	„	No. 20,	„ 2,	*for*	पुर्णेन्दु...	*read*	पूर्णेन्दु...
p. 307	„	No. 25,	„ 2,	*for*	24	*read*	27

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

OUTLINES OF JAINISM: By S. Gopalan, Published by Wiley Eastern Pvt. Ltd., J-43A, South Extension 1, New Delhi 110049, 1973, pp. viii + 205, Price Rs. 12/-

Dr. Gopalan's book is a scholarly and systematic analysis of Jainism as a significant aspect of Indian philosophy and culture. Though, as he says, the book is based primarily on his lectures to post-graduate students, it can equally be interesting to anyone who wants to have an authentic account of Jainism.

Starting from the major problem of the historicity of the Jaina school itself, in a relevant discussion he justly shows that Jainism is not and never was an 'off-shoot of Buddhism', as was believed by some western Orientalists. He next discusses the historicity of the great personalities of Parsvanatha and Mahavira, and gives insight into the differences between their teachings, and how probably they led to the two sects within Jainism.

It is with relevance that the author passes on to discuss the philosophical nature of the system and estimates the popular criticism that Jainism is 'atheistic'. He shows how adversely it would affect the real spirituality of the system, if 'atheism' were wrongly understood to be just the denial of God the Creator. With regard to the ceremonial warship in the Jaina temples, he well says that behind such modes of worship the adored Jina stands as an example and an inspiration for anyone trying to raise himself to that high level of spiritual freedom.

The work is systematically presented in five Parts (Introduction, Epistemology, Psychology, Metaphysics, and Ethics) with references to original sources as well as the works dealing with the system. The author has treated these subjects fairly comprehensively. The material is authentic, and contributes to one's getting interested in Jainism as a systematic development of a section of India's philosophical and spiritual tradition.

The discussion on the 'Anuvrata Movement', which comes at the end of the last Part, is particularly relevant to our times. Dealing with the endeavour of Acharya Sri Tulasi, the contemporary Jaina leader, the author helps us to understand the Jaina perspective of achieving the great by practising the small. He presents the Acharya's views and shows that Anuvrata is not sectarian but universal. The practice has been shown to include *ahimsa* (along with others) as a pre-requisite not only for establishing world harmony but also for making personal spiritual evolution.

With a Bibliography and an Index, the book has a finished form, and is a very useful and welcome addition to literature on Jainism.

Dr. K. B. Ramakrishna Rao
Professor and Head of the Department of Hindu Philosophy,
University of Mysore

BOOKS RECEIVED

(1) KABIR; (2) SHER SHAH; (3) DRONA; (4) SURYA; (5) URVASHI; (6) ADI SHANKARA; (7) GHATOTKACHA—Published by India Book House, Bombay 26, 1974 (?) pp. 32, each, Price Rs. 2/- each.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: By SWAMI AKHILANANDA, Published by Claude Stark, Inc., Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 02670, U.S.A. 1974, pp. 225. Price $8.50.

GOD OF ALL: SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PLURALITY: BY CLAUDE A. STARK, Published by Claude Stark, Inc., 1974, pp. 236, Price $ 12.00.

DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY: BY ST. ELMO NAUMAN, Published by Philosophical Library. 15 E. 40th St., New York 10016. 1973, pp. 273, Price $ 10.00.

OUTLINE OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: BY A. K. WARDER, Published by Motilal Banarsidass. Bungalow Rd.. Jawahar Nagar. Delhi-7. 1971. pp. 262. Rs. 30/-.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BALARAM MANDIR: AN APPEAL

Sri Ramakrishna and Balaram Mandir. Balaram Mandir, hallowed by the memories of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and his brother disciples, is greatly venerated by their devotees and has become an international centre of pilgrimage. Located at 57 Ramkanto Bose St., Calcutta 3, it was the home of Balaram Basu, one of the chief lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He visited this house more than a hundred times. During his last years the Master would invariably stay here whenever he spent a night in Calcutta, sleeping in the south-western corner room on the first floor. During his last illness he spent seven memorable days here, bringing joy and spiritual uplift to a large number of devotees. In the hall adjoining this room he usually met the devotees, showering his unbounded grace on them and inspiring them by his spontaneous talks, devotional songs and dances. Here they saw him many times in the wondrous state of *samadhi*. It was in this hall that the celebrated actor-playwright Girish Ghosh had his first intimate conversation with him. In the adjoining quadrangular veranda on the day of the annual Car Festival, the Master with his devotees would pull the chariot of Jagannath, amidst musical chanting of the Lord's name and ecstatic dancing.

After the Passing Away: Shortly after Sri Ramakrishna's death his holy relics were brought to Balaram Mandir from Cossipore Garden House. Here, in his room, the relics were worshipped daily until establishment of the monastery at Baranagore. At that time the Holy Mother too came to Balaram Mandir, staying in its inner section for about a week. Later on also, she lived here for days on many occasions, and notable incidents in her life are associated with the house. It was in the hall here that on May 1, 1897, Swami Vivekananda inaugurated 'The Ramakrishna Mission Association'—later the Ramakrishna Mission. On that occasion Swamiji stayed at this Mandir for some days. In the next three years he would on occasion attend Sunday meetings of the Association in the hall and enrapture the audiences by discourses and devotional songs. This house was the favourite Calcutta abode of Swami Brahmananda; and it was in the hall here that he passed away in 1922, and Swami Premananda in 1918. In the southeastern corner room on the ground floor, Swami Adbhutananda lived for about a decade. In fact, most of the apostles of Sri Ramakrishna lived here on many occasions, giving inspiration to numerous devotees, so that the outer section of the Mandir came to resemble a monastery.

Balaram Mandir Trust. By the last wishes of Ramakrishna Basu, son of Balaram, a Public and Charitable Trust for Balaram Mandir was created in 1922, aiming to preserve the sacred memories of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. The Trust Deed provides for residence in the Mandir of Sannyasis and Brahmacharis of Belur Math and monastic members of the Ramakrishna Mission, and for supply of food to them. It also provides for religious lectures, discourses and songs in the premises. Thus the outer section of the Mandir is now a monastery and centre of activity of the Mission. More than a quarter-century ago the Trustees installed a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna in the room where he used to stay, and consecrated it as a public shrine, for daily worship. The hall has been used exclusively for religious purposes—lectures, discourses, and songs, etc., for the benefit of the public. The annual celebration of the Car Festival in the veranda, in which Sri Ramakrishna used to take part, is still continued. Thus the Mandir has been a source of spiritual sustenance to the devotees who have been flocking here ever since the time of the Master.

Preservation of the Building. And yet the building has long been in a state of sad disrepair, for reasons beyond our control. A protracted litigation in which the validity of the Trust itself was questioned, had long prevented the Trustees from taking steps for the building's preservation. Thus it is now in a dilapidated condition and may collapse at any time. Fortunately the litigation ended in January 1973, upholding the Trust, and thus enabling the Trustees to make urgent repairs with generous help from a few devotees.

Now competent engineers and architects say that the building, about 200 years old, needs immediate complete renovation. Most of the woodwork doors and windows are worn out and require repair or replacement, while all electrical wiring and fittings must be replaced. Hence we now propose thorough renovation, while yet maintaining the outer section—most intimately associated with memories of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples—in its original form as far as practicable. This will involve huge expenditure.

Along with this work, other needs obviously come. The shrine and hall must be adequately furnished and decorated; religious functions must be organized

on a bigger scale and for larger audiences. Provision must be made for many more inmates in the monastery, with proper sanitary arrangements, water supply, lighting, etc.

Appeal. On a modest estimate the Trustees urgently need at least Rs. 5,00,000/-, for the above expenses. Further, at least Rs. 2,000/- per month for running expenses. But we have practically no funds at our disposal. Therefore we fervently appeal to the public to contribute liberally to the Balaram Mandir Trust Fund so that this hallowed memorial building may be properly preserved and its functions extended. All donations will be gratefully received and thankfully acknowledged. Cheques should be drawn in favour of 'Balaram Mandir', and remittances sent to the Secretary, Balaram Mandir, at either of the two addresses:

(1) Balaram Mandir, 57 Ramkanto Bose St., Calcutta 700-003,

(2) Ramakrishna Mission, Howrah (West Bengal), Belur Math 711-202

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA
SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA
AND THE OTHER TRUSTEES OF
BALARAM MANDIR TRUST

THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA BUENOS AIRES—ARGENTINA

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1973

Founded in 1932 by Swami Vijayananda, who remained as its Head till his death September first of this year, this Centre grew rapidly in size and influence in Argentina as well as several neighbouring countries. It is still the only Centre of the Ramakrishna Math (or Ramakrishna Mission) in South America, although now it has under its guidance affiliated Centres in Brazil at Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, while a group of devotees in Uruguay also come periodically to the Ashrama. By 1941 the Centre was installed in its own building, which is still its home; but the Swami's work included many visits to adjoining countries as well as to Brazil. At times he travelled as far as Guatemala (in Central America); and the numerous translations of standard books from the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature have found use throughout South and Central America as well as Mexico.

Currently the work has been continued by Swami Paratparananda, the present Head of the Centre. The daily routine includes morning devotional services in the Shrine, regular periods of meditation, and evening Arati. The Swami gave interviews to numerous devotees and earnest seekers; attended to the extensive correspondence; and supervised the active Publication department. At the weekly Sunday meetings he read the *Gospel* and *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, with questions sometimes answered after the readings. Further, a series of public lectures in the city of Buenos Aires was given. A number of devotees from near and far were entertained at the Ashrama for brief or prolonged periods.

Publications: During the year and for the first time in Argentina, two works of Sankaracharya were published: *The Crest Jewel of Discrimination* and 'Direct Realization' (*Aparokshanubhuti*). Swami Vivekananda's *Jnana Yoga* has been re-edited for the third time. Vivekananda's *Bhakti Yoga* will also appear in its third edition during 1974. A translation of 'Spiritual Development' by Swami Abhedananda, is also expected to be published soon.

Holy Festivals: As in previous years the birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and other disciples of the Master were celebrated. Fitting celebrations were also held for Durga Puja and Christmas Eve.

Building Repairs: The Shrine has been remodelled, giving it greater space, and likewise the floor and ceiling have been altered. The 'annexe' to the main building was painted and a ceiling put to the principal room, which is occupied by the Swami.

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